

recite the verse of the throne [*al-Baqara* 255], from, “Allah, there is no god but He, the Living, the Eternal,” to the end of the verse. If you do so a guardian from Allah will come and protect you from the devils until the morning.’ I decided to let him go. In the morning, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) again asked me, ‘What happened to your prisoner last night, Abu Huraira?’ I answered, ‘He claimed that he would teach me some words that would benefit me greatly.’ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ‘He has told the truth although he is a liar. Do you know who was that person you’ve been talking to for the last three nights?’ I replied in the negative. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told me, ‘That was a devil.’” In this hadith it is clear that devil jinn took the form of a human being.

They may also take the form of certain animals, for example, camels, donkeys, cows, dogs or cats. But, in particular, they take the form of a black dog. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has said that the black dog interrupts the prayer and he gave the reason for that that it is a devil. Ibn Taimiya said, “The black dog is the devil of the dogs. And the jinn often take its form. Similarly, they take the form of a black cat.’ The color black has the greatest strength for the devils as opposed to other colors; in it is the power of the heat.”

The jinn of the houses

The jinn take the forms of snakes and appear in front of humans. It is for this reason that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has forbidden the killing of the snakes found in the houses, out of fear that they may be jinn that have embraced Islam. It is recorded in *Sahih Muslim* on the authority of Abu Saeed al-Khudri that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

¹ This translator is not aware of any evidence from the Quran or sunnah that shows that it is common or correct to say that devils take on the form of black cats. A *statement of that nature needs to be supported from authentic evidences.*—JZ

إن بالمدينة نفرا من الجن قد أسلموا فمن رأى شيئا من هذه العوامر
فليؤذنه ثلاثا فإن بدا له بعد فليقتله فإنه شيطان

“A group of jinn in Madina have embraced Islam. So he who sees anyone of them, should warn it three times. And if it appears after that it should be killed, for it must be a devil.”

One of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) killed one of the snakes in the house and this led to his death. Muslim has recorded it in his *Sahih* that Abu al-Saib went to Abu Saeed’s house and found him praying. Abu al-Saib was waiting for him to finish his prayer when he heard some rumbling in the bundles of wood which were lying in the corner of the house. He looked and he found it was a snake. He was about to kill it when Abu Saeed gestured to him to sit down. After the prayer, Abu Saeed pointed to a room and he said, “Do you see this room?” “Yes,” answered al-Saib. Abu Saeed said, “There was once a man who was a newlywed and we went to participate with the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Battle of the Trench. He used to ask the Prophet’s permission to go to his wife and the Prophet cautioned him to take along his weapons for he feared [an attack from behind by] the tribe Quraidha. The man took his weapons and when he returned to his family he found his wife standing between the doors of the apartment. He was enraged from jealousy and took a stab at her with his spear. She told him to keep his spear away and to enter the house to see what had made her go outside. He entered and found a big snake on the bed. He struck it with his spear and pierced it. He was bent upon taking it outside, but the snake had enough strength to bite him. No one knows who died first from that incident, the snake or the man. The people made mention of this incident to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), asking him to ask Allah to bring that man back to life. Instead, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Ask forgiveness for our companion. In Madina there are jinn that embraced Islam. if any of you should see one of them [that is, a snake], he should give him warning for three days. If it appears after that, it should be killed because it is, therefore, a devil.”